



## Director's Message

**Maj. Gen. Gary S. Patton, U.S. Army, Director, DoD SAPRO**



While much has changed since the last issue of SAPR Source, there's one thing that has remained constant: The Department of Defense's (DoD) commitment and dedication to combating sexual assault in the military.

Combating the crime of sexual assault is a top priority and a critically important readiness issue for the Department. It's an affront to the values we defend, erodes the cohesion our units demand, and has no place in the military. In the U.S. military we take care of our people on the battlefield better than anyone else -- and we must extend this same ethos of care and trust to supporting victims and combating sexual assault within our ranks.

The Department's sexual assault prevention and response program is not static. We've made some progress, but we're not satisfied and recognize there's much more work to do.

Policies of the past are not the same as those we have today, nor will they be the ones of the future. We continually assess ourselves and our program to identify ways to improve and advance the program.

As the Department is moving ahead with important new programs to combat sexual assault, we've restored and revised the SAPR Source to keep you informed.

The Department has implemented a variety of recent initiatives to change how we work to prevent the crime of sexual assault and how we respond when that crime occurs. [In May, Secretary Hagel directed a range of eight initiatives](#) designed to strengthen the Department's programs in the areas of commander accountability, command climate, victim advocacy, and safety. [In August, he directed seven additional measures](#) to improve victim support, strengthen pretrial investigations, enhance oversight, and make prevention and response efforts more consistent across the military services.

Secretary Hagel also directed a DoD-wide SAPR Stand-down this summer. The goal of this stand-down was for leaders, recruiters, Sexual Assault Response Coordinators, and every member of the Armed Forces to clearly understand we are accountable for fostering a climate where sexist behaviors, sexual harassment, and sexual assault are not tolerated, condoned, or ignored and where dignity, trust, and respect are core values to live by and define how we treat one another.

Additionally, many of you also participated in DoD-wide visual inspections this summer to ensure our workplaces are free from materials that create a degrading or offensive work environment. With the direct involvement and attention of our military leadership - from top to bottom in the chain of command - inappropriate, sexually explicit, degrading, and offensive items were removed and where needed, counseling and disciplinary actions were taken. Executing this critically important effort affirmed the commitment to combating sexual assault and fostering an environment free of sexist behavior and sexual harassment.

At DoD SAPRO, we are constantly assessing our program and looking for ways to implement initiatives and tools that will affect real change. We are committed to seeking feedback and incorporating improvements as suggested by survivors, first responders, unit leaders and service members across the force. In fact, several of our most recent initiatives were suggested by junior enlisted service members participating in a Survivor Summit earlier in the year. The bottom line is that we must all strive to make our SAPR programs, policies and practices the most effective they can be - this is what our service members deserve!

September 2013

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## New SAPR Tools

DoD continues to combat sexual assault and work towards meeting the needs of sexual assault victims and the first responders who provide victim care and support. Here are several efforts that directly support these objectives.

[Hagel Announces New Anti-Sexual Assault Initiatives](#) - On Aug. 15th, Secretary Hagel announced seven new initiatives to strengthen and standardize DoD's sexual assault prevention and response effort. In a memo to the field, Hagel called elimination of sexual assault in the military one of the department's top priorities.

For more information:

- [Pentagon Press Conference on New Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Initiatives](#)
- [Hagel Initiatives Keep Pressure on Sexual Assault](#)
- [White House Issues Statement on Anti-Sexual Assault Initiatives](#)



[Safe HelpRoom](#) - In response to a need for peer support services identified by users of the Defense Department's Safe Helpline for military sexual assault survivors, DoD has launched the Safe HelpRoom, a new service allowing survivors to participate in group chat sessions to connect with and support one another in a moderated and secure online environment at [SafeHelpline.org](#).

"Safe HelpRoom is a groundbreaking development in the Department's commitment to support military victims of sexual assault," said Jessica L. Wright, Acting Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness.

"Survivors of sexual assault have told us that being able to discuss their concerns with peers can provide a level of support not available through other means."

Access to peer support helps survivors feel less lonely, isolated or judged. Extensive research shows that speaking with peers can lead to improved coping skills, a greater sense of adjustment and reduced stress, depression and anxiety. Survivors report that they appreciate practical advice and information about treatment options from peers. Offering an online forum helps overcome barriers to assistance some victims face since it's free, anonymous and available anywhere via the internet.

"Safe HelpRoom was designed with unique safeguards to ensure a safe and welcoming place for survivors to connect," said Maj. Gen. Patton. "Safe HelpRoom is the first of its kind to require participants to commit to a series of 'ground rules' of acceptable behavior before entering a session. Additionally, each participant comment is reviewed to ensure it complies with the ground rules prior to posting for the group to see. Safe HelpRoom provides a secure and private environment for positive and supportive discussions."

Safe HelpRoom sessions are available twice weekly in two-hour sessions and the session schedule can be found at [SafeHelpline.org](#).

Safe HelpRoom augments the support provided by the Safe Helpline, which is available to members of the DoD community in accordance with SAPR Policy. As part of the Safe Helpline, victims can access support services by "click, call or text." This anonymous and confidential resource is free and can be accessed worldwide, 24-hours a day, to connect with live sexual assault support professionals.

Maj. Gen. Gary S. Patton, left, and Ms. Jessica L. Wright, acting Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, right, present Dr. Kimberly "Tony" Korol-Evans with the 2013 Safe Helpline Operator of the Year award at the Rape, Incest and Abuse National Network in Washington, D.C. Korol-Evans, who works with DoD sexual assault victims, received the award as part of the launch of the internet chat room, the DoD Safe HelpRoom for service members and families.



For more information:

- [DoD Adds Peer Support Chat Sessions for Sexual Assault Victims](#)
- [Officials Reaffirm DoD's Commitment to Fighting Sexual Assault](#)
- [DoD Safe Helpline](#)



#### DoD Sexual Assault Victim Advocate Certification Program (D-SAACP)

The Department successfully launched the DoD Sexual Assault Victim Advocate Certification Program (D-SAACP) and has certified over 22,000 applicants. D-SAACP applicants are military and DoD-civilian Sexual Assault Response Coordinators (SARCs) or Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Victim Advocates (SAPR VAs) who serve as first responders to coordinate care and provide advocacy services to victims of sexual assault.

The certification of SARCs and SAPR VAs will help improve the quality of support victims receive. Victims can be confident they have access to professional victim advocates and will be treated with dignity and respect throughout their recovery.

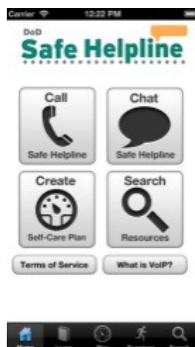
Each application consists of a commander's recommendation, an acknowledgement of adherence to a professional code of ethics, and proof of training. To recognize SARCs/VAs with advanced experience, we established a tiered certification with four levels - starting at Level I, for those serving as entry level SARCs/VAs, and going through Level IV, representing those with eight or more years of service to victims.

A review committee comprised of civilian sexual assault and victim advocacy experts reviews each application and grants D-SAACP certification to successful applicants. Certification is valid for two years, after which certified SARCs and SAPR VAs can reapply with updated letters of recommendation and proof of continuing education, among other requirements.

SARCs and SAPR VAs who are not yet certified may submit their applications to [DSAACP@TRYNOVA.org](mailto:DSAACP@TRYNOVA.org). Please be advised the deadline has passed for guaranteed review before the October 1 deadline, but applications are continually accepted and reviewed beyond October 1.

For more information:

- [D-SAACP Certification Program](#)
- [SecDef Announces Initiatives Targeting Sexual Assault](#)
- Email your questions to: [DSAACP@TRYNOVA.org](mailto:DSAACP@TRYNOVA.org)
- For application status, email: [DSAACP-followup@TRYNOVA.org](mailto:DSAACP-followup@TRYNOVA.org)



Safe Helpline Mobile App Wins Innovation Award - The Safe Helpline Mobile Application (app) won the American Telemedicine Association's 2013 President's Award for Innovation for being the most "novel use of technology leading to innovative health applications and social services support." Get the free app for your device from the [Apple app store](#) or [Android app store](#).

For more information:

- [DoD Safe Helpline Mobile App Now Available](#)
- [DoD Safe Helpline](#)

**DoD SAPR Strategic Plan** - On May 6th, Secretary Hagel described the DoD-wide approach to combat the crime of sexual assault in his newly published strategic plan. He directed the military services to align their programs with a revised Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Strategic Plan, one that aligns with and operationalizes the key tasks defined in the Joint Chiefs of Staff's Strategic Direction to the Joint Force in May 2012. By clearly defining priorities, objectives, and tasks, this plan - and its effective implementation - will help ensure that DoD's ongoing initiatives to reduce and ultimately eliminate sexual assault are being closely tracked and achieving their purpose. For more information, please go to the links below.

- [SecDef Memo](#)
- [DoD Releases Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Strategy](#)
- [DoD Unveils New Sexual Assault Prevention Strategy](#)

[Department Releases New SAPR Instruction](#) - In March, the Department revised SAPR procedures concerning how to respond to the crime of sexual assault, including best practices, recent changes to federal law and improvements to victim care. It provides comprehensive instructions to the entire Department, including critical guidance on commanders' responsibilities, training requirements, case management, victim safety, first responder obligations and integration of health care professionals, among many others. You can review the [entire DoDI](#) and the [information paper](#) on [sapr.mil](#).

For more information:

- [DoDI 6495.02](#)

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## Did You Know...?

[Response System Panel Hearing](#) - Congress mandated the establishment of an independent review panel to assess DoD systems used to investigate, prosecute, and adjudicate crimes involving adult sexual assault. The panel held its first public meeting on June 27th to begin consideration of appropriate changes for the military justice system regarding sexual assault. Secretary Hagel and Maj. Gen. Patton talked to the panel during this first meeting and committed their support to the panel's important mission.

For more information:

- [Response Systems to Adult Sexual Assault Crimes Panel](#)
- [Hagel Meets With Sexual Assault Response Systems Review Panel](#)
- [Watch Panel Hearing](#)

[Survey Fact Sheet](#) - In fiscal year 2012, the Department's confidential survey indicated that approximately 26,000 active duty service members experienced some form of unwanted sexual contact, the survey's term for the contact crimes between adults that constitute sexual assault under military law and consists of three broad categories. This [survey fact sheet](#) explains how the Department conducts these surveys as a way to evaluate each Services' prevention and response programs, as well as assess the workplace and gender-relations environment of the active duty and reserve components.

For more information:

- [FY12 Annual Report](#)

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## SAPR Spotlight

[Exceptional SARC's of the Year](#) - As part of Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM) in April, DoD honored the Exceptional SARC's of the year from each Service and the National Guard Bureau during its fifth annual celebration of the best in their fields. On behalf of Secretary Wright, Acting Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, SAPRO presented the SARC's with an award recognizing them for providing particularly noteworthy care and support to survivors of sexual assault.

The honorees include:



**Army: Sergeant First Class Josalette Simmons**

SFC Simmons is assigned to the XVIII Airborne Corps Sexual Harassment/Assault Response & Prevention Office in Fort Bragg, N.C. She demonstrated excellence in all aspects of her duties and an unsurpassed work ethic as she played a pivotal role in transitioning the SHARP program. Her compassion, concern and caring for Soldiers, families and civilians set the example for all SHARP specialists and inspired them to recognize the need for continued education regarding sexual assault in order to provide the support and care of sexual assault victims.



**Navy: Ms. Kathleen Elizabeth Schofield**

Ms. Schofield is a SARC at Naval Air Station Whidbey Island, Wash. Her solid reputation with sailors, Navy leadership, and local judicial and law enforcement personnel has ensured a cohesive, values-driven response to sexual assault. Her innovative prevention programs have helped to significantly reduce the rate of sexual assault. Through her demonstrated leadership, the actions that foster a healthy and respectful community have been created with unparalleled authenticity and depth.

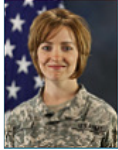


**Marine Corps: Major Robyn Mestemacher**

Maj. Mestemacher was the SARC for 1st Marine Expeditionary Force at Camp Pendleton, Calif. Her truly exceptional level of knowledge, personal initiative and visionary guidance transformed the program from one that simply adhered to standards to a superb program model for other major commands to emulate Corps-wide.

**Air Force: Ms. Janaee Stone**

Ms. Stone is the Installation SARC at Hill Air Force Base, Utah. In 2012 alone, Ms. Stone instructed and trained over ten thousand service members and DoD civilians during various commanders' calls: First Term Airmen Center, Airmen Leadership School, Military Personnel Management Course, Base Newcomer's, Civilian New Hire, Spouse's Heart Link, Pre-deployment briefings, Personnel Deployment Function line processing and Reintegration briefings.

**National Guard Bureau: Captain Jennifer Hunt**

Capt. Hunt is the SARC at Joint Force Headquarters-Florida. Her compassion, leadership and unyielding dedication resulted in the evolution of a comprehensive Florida National Guard Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program. She works tirelessly with commanders and her peers in other Soldier service-related programs and directorates to ensure victims of sexual assault have the resources they need to aid the healing process.

**Coast Guard: Ms. Kristin Cox**

Ms. Cox is the Employee Assistance Program Coordinator for Coast Guard District 13 in Seattle. In 2009, she pioneered a novel, highly effective approach to SAPR training called the "Sexual Assault Prevention Workshop" which was adopted as a Coast Guard-wide training initiative.

"These awardees were selected from more than one thousand qualified SARCs across the Military Services," said SAPRO's Director, Maj. Gen. Gary S. Patton, U.S. Army. "I am honored to acknowledge their accomplishments and commitment to victims of sexual assault, and I am privileged to work with such dedicated individuals who continue to strengthen the Department's prevention and response efforts."

For more information:

- [Commitment to Helping Sexual Assault Victims Earns Honors](#)

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## SAPR in the News

### [Sexism must be treated like racism, top officer says](#)

"The Pentagon's sexual assault crisis will be solved only when troops treat sexist remarks with the same disdain as racial slurs," the officer in charge of preventing the crime told USA TODAY.

### [Kevlar for the Mind: 4 Ways to Lead the Fight Against Sexual Assault](#)

Bret Moore, a clinical psychologist who served in Iraq, responds to the question, "As a military leader...What can I do to prevent sexual assault and make those under my command feel safe?" Moore recommends four behaviors to prevent and reduce the impact of sexual assault: look at your own blind spots, ensure education and training occur, address inappropriate behavior immediately and visibly support your unit's sexual assault prevention personnel. (Source: Army Times)

### [New Investigative Approach Helps Sexual Assault Victims Recall Details](#)

A new approach to interviewing sexual assault victims is gleaning more information about the crimes and leading to greater numbers of offender prosecutions. Because law enforcement investigations are designed more for witnesses rather than victims, this new approach was developed as a way to interview victims without making them relive the assault. (Source: American Forces Press Service)

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